

DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON U-2 INCIDENT AT MAY 7  
LINCOLN WHITE PRESS CONFERENCE



The Department has received the text of Mr. Khrushchev's further remarks about the unarmed plane which is reported to have been shot down in the Soviet Union. As previously announced it was known that a U-2 plane was missing. As a result of the inquiry ordered by the President it has been established that insofar as the authorities in Washington are concerned there was no authorization for any such flight as described by Mr. Khrushchev.

Nevertheless it appears that in endeavoring to obtain information now concealed behind the Iron Curtain a flight over Soviet territory was probably undertaken by an unarmed civilian U-2 plane.

It is certainly no secret that given the state of the world today intelligence collection activities are practiced by all countries, and postwar history certainly reveals that the Soviet Union has not been lagging behind in this field. The necessity for such activities as measures for legitimate national defense is enhanced by the excessive secrecy practiced by the Soviet Union in contrast to the Free World.

One of the things creating tension in the world today is apprehension over surprise attack with weapons of mass destruction. To reduce mutual suspicion and to give a measure of protection against surprise attack the United States in 1955 offered its "Open Skies" proposal - a proposal which was rejected out of hand by the Soviet Union. It is in relation to the danger of surprise attack that planes of the type of unarmed civilian U-2 aircraft have made flights along the frontiers of the Free World for the past four years.